

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Justice
Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program

Funding No: EPA-OECA-OEJ-14-01
CFDA: 66.306



Applicant: Louisiana Environmental Action Network

Project Title: A Collaborative Effort for a Better Grand Bois

Description: This project is a new collaborative effort between the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, Defenders of Our Land and Water, Louisiana State University and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to empower community members and facilitate opportunities to identify and reduce environmental concerns and threats to public health in the small, rural Native American community of Grand Bois, LA

Partnering Organizations:

1. Louisiana Environmental Action Network
2. Defenders of Our Land and Water, a community group of Grand Bios residents.
3. Louisiana State University
4. Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

I. Project Title and Project Purpose Statement

A Collaborative Effort for a Better Grand Bois

This project is a new collaborative effort between the Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN), Defenders of Our Land and Water (Grand Bois, LA), Louisiana State University (LSU) and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) to empower community members and facilitate opportunities to identify and reduce environmental concerns and threats to public health in the small, rural Native American community of Grand Bois, LA

The coordinated efforts of these 4 diverse organizations are designed to address the public health concerns of the Grand Bois community associated with frequent odor events and possible violations of the Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)3. Air pollution resulting from nearby waste handling operations has been documented in the past. The community of Grand Bois is near the town of Bourg, LA within zip code 70343. It is adjacent to a industrial waste facility that is reported to have a long history of significant odor events within the community. This project is designed to address air pollution and the potential health impacts as related to odor events experienced by community residents. This project aims to educate and empower Grand Bois residents to document these events and any potentially associated health symptoms through the utilization of a citizen guidebook. This collaborative will also work to facilitate the opportunity for residents of Grand Bois to receive assistance from the appropriate organizations to address their findings and work towards reductions of identified impacts.

The Collaborative consists of:

1. Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN), the applicant, a 501(c)3 organization based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with a 27 year history of addressing environmental concerns throughout the state from a community perspective.
2. Defenders of Our Land and Water, a community group of Grand Bios residents concerned about the impacts the neighboring waste facility has on the community and environment.
3. Louisiana State University (LSU), as represented by Dr. Margaret Reams, Professor of Environmental Sciences and LSU Superfund Research Program Community Engagement Core Leader
4. Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), the state agency whose mission is to provide service to the people of Louisiana through comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety and welfare while considering sound policies regarding employment and economic development.

The outcomes of this collaborative effort are expected to be:

1. The completion of a citizens resource guide to solving environmental problems tentatively entitled: *Louisiana Citizen's Guidebook to Environmental Safety and Responsibility*.
2. The training of approximately 50 people, from the community of Grand Bois, in utilizing this guidebook as a tool to address their local environmental concerns.
3. The collaborative development of a list of recommendations for addressing and reducing the documented community impacts / concerns in Grand Bois.



II. Environmental and/or Public Health Information about the Affected Community

Grand Bois is a small, primarily Native American Community in Lafourche Parish outside of Bourg, Louisiana. This community consists of approximately 75 homes, including many multi-generational working class households that have a long history in the community and a culture of utilizing and appreciating the local environment. Many families within Grand Bois have a history of fishing and hunting and have historically supplemented their diets through farming and fishing the adjacent lands, bayous and coastal wetlands. In 1982 a commercial waste facility located adjacent to the community of Grand Bois. The closest residence in Grand Bois is approximately 500ft from the edge of the waste facility with the entire community of Grand Bois within roughly 1/2 mile. At the time of the facilities development, the community members report receiving little and inaccurate information about the facilities planned operations. This facility handles a variety of wastes, including oil field waste, treating the waste in open cells along both sides of Highway 24 that runs through the center of the facility and the community of Grand Bois. The current owner of the facility, r360, describes the facility as:

...49.1 acres of active treatment cells, 2 surface ponds, three reuse stockpile areas, 3 saltwater disposal wells and a barge dock. It is constructed and permitted with natural clay liners. Each cell constructed has a perforated underground collection system.

The accepted wastes include:

- Produce Salt Water
- Drill muds/cuttings (oil-based, water-based)
- Completion Fluids
- E & P Tank storage solids & fluids
- Produced sands & solids
- Washout Water & Washout Pit Waters
- Nonhazardous Gas Plant processing solids
- Pipeline Test Waters
- E & P Waste from Commercial Facilities
- Crude Oil Spill clean-up waste
- Salvageable hydrocarbons bound from permitted salvage oil operators
- Other E&P waste (DNR approved waste-must get approval prior to shipment)

The Grand Bois community has a long history of concern regarding the impacts this facility has on the surrounding air, water, land and the health of their community. Wastes at this facility potentially contain dangerous hydrocarbons such as benzene, a carcinogen, and other hazardous substances such as hydrogen sulfide and heavy metals. The most significant community concern to date began in 1994 when the waste facility received over 80 truck loads of waste from an Exxon facility in Alabama that was closing.



The fumes from the waste allegedly caused severe health symptoms among the children of Grand Bois as documented at the time by local physician Dr. Michael Robichaux of Raceland, LA. This struggle received a significant amount of media attention including a 60 minute national TV special entitled: Town Under Siege. Nearly the entire population of Grand Bois entered into a lawsuit that resulted in what most Grand Bois residents considered to be an inadequate settlement that did not adequately address their concerns. Recently, community concern about the waste facility increased again in 2010 as traffic to the facility allegedly increased and many residents believe the waste facility began accepting material from the BP Oil Spill clean-up efforts along the Gulf Coast. The community of Grand Bois is relatively isolated in rural southeast Louisiana with the next closest community located over 3 miles away.

The community of Grand Bois bears the brunt of any potential impacts from waste handling operations due to their close proximity to the facility and their historical and cultural dependence on hunting, fishing and farming the surrounding environments. The ongoing impacts of this facility pose a potential threat to the health and quality of life of this historic, rural, Native American community.

III. Organization's Historical Connection to the Affected Community

The Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN) was founded in 1986 as network of concerned community members across Louisiana dealing with environmental challenges. LEAN has become a highly respected resource for individuals and organizations across the state and the country who are dealing with a variety of environmental issues. At the time of the most publicized struggle in Grand Bois, 1994, LEAN began a relationship with community members who were seeking LEAN's experience and support in dealing with the problems they were experiencing from the nearby waste facility. LEAN assisted the community in organizing themselves and educating them on relevant environmental regulations and potential avenues for resolving their complaints. LEAN has always been a community driven organization that strives to be a resource to educate and empower citizens to solve their own environmental challenges. As such, the priorities and strategies of the Grand Bois community have never been decided by LEAN. Throughout the last 18 years, residents of Grand Bois have regularly attended LEAN conferences and events to network and learn from LEAN as they continue to navigate the challenges they feel are present in their community. Within the past year, LEAN has been able to utilize multi-media tools (video, online content, map, etc.) to bring attention to the problems in Grand Bois. Clarice Friloux, a life-long resident of Grand Bois and perhaps the most vocal advocate for the community has held a position on LEAN's Board of Directors for many years. Mrs Friloux has recently organized many residents of Grand Bois into a community group, Defenders of Our Land and Water.

LEAN's ongoing relationship with Mrs. Friloux and the community of Grand Bois has informed us that the community feels they suffer repeated impacts from the adjacent waste facility. These potential impacts and concerns were recently exacerbated as operations at the facility are believed to have increased following the BP Oil Spill in 2010. This along with the communities long history of complaints has led LEAN to organize this collaborative in an effort to constructively and effectively address the potential public health concerns long standing in this community.

IV. Project Description

This project aims to document and reduce the community impacts, specifically, air pollution and odor events, due to the operations of the waste facility in Grand Bois Louisiana.

The Grand Bois community has a long history of complaints against the adjacent waste facility. They have actively sought resolution to their complaints in the past, including through litigation. Limited environmental monitoring and health studies have been performed and the community continues to receive periodic media attention regarding their situation. However, the residents of Grand Bois have not been well organized and empowered to participate in the standard procedure of dealing with environmental concerns by documenting and reporting to the state regulatory agency (LDEQ). This collaborative problem solving project is not designed to redo the many efforts that have already been made in Grand Bois. This project is focused on educating and empowering the Grand Bois community to utilize basic tools to actively and effectively address their on-going concerns. The main components of this collaborative effort are:

- A. Partnering with the Louisiana State University in development of the *Louisiana Citizens Guidebook to Environmental Safety and Responsibility* (tentative title).
- B. Partnering with Defenders of Our Land and Water to organize community meetings with Grand Bois residents to hear their specific concerns, and goals for their community.
- C. Host workshops between LSU, LEAN and Defenders of Our Land and Water (Grand Bois) to teach community residents how to utilize the Citizens Guidebook and implement strategies to address their identified concerns through documenting environmental and public health concerns.
- D. Facilitate communication of community documentation between LEAN, Louisiana State University and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
- E. Host opportunity for LDEQ to discuss community documentation with community residents and educate community regarding opportunities to address identified concerns
- F. Facilitate communication and cooperation between LEAN, LSU, Defenders of Our Land and Water, LDEQ and potential identified responsible party (adjacent waste facility) to identify and reduce documented community impacts and concerns.
- G. Develop list of recommendations to be implemented in Grand Bois that could also be replicated in other communities facing similar circumstances to reduce identified community concerns.

The collaborative will help to give the community members the tools to accurately quantify environmental related complaints within their community and communicate / report those effectively to the government and private industry that may be able to resolve these complaints.

LEAN has a long history of educating and empowering communities and will draw upon over 70 years of combined experience including our Technical Advisor, chemist and respected environmental expert Wilma Subra. LEAN will be responsible for the administrative management of the project as a whole and coordinating the efforts of the partnering organizations.

The Louisiana State University and Professor Margaret Reams have been working together with LEAN to develop the *Louisiana Citizens Guidebook for Environmental Safety and Responsibility*. Dr. Reams has extensive expertise in environment sciences, and is the Community Engagement Core Leader for LSU's Superfund Research Program. Dr. Reams and LSU have

been a valuable resource for LEAN and it's members in the past and will be continuing that partnership through this project. Currently LEAN is also partnering with LSU in their work with the industrialized community of North Baton Rouge. LEAN and LSU will be the primary designers of the Citizen Guidebook as informed by our decades of community empowerment and academic experience. However, the Grand Bois community and the Defenders of Our Land and Water are solely responsible for choosing the concerns and goals of their own community.

Defenders of Our Land and Water are a community group consisting of Grand Bois residents. They are responsible for organizing the participation of the Grand Bois community in this project. Defenders of Our Land and Water will have the opportunity to provide input during the development of the *Guidebook* and it's real world application in their community. As representatives of the affected community, their members will be the driving force behind the decision making for this projects priorities as they affect Grand Bois.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) will be a valuable and necessary resource for this project and the community as the official state department tasked to provide the people of Louisiana with comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety and welfare. LDEQ will have the opportunity to advise in the development of the Citizens Guidebook and will consult with the community and collaborative members in regards to any documented concerns throughout the project. The collaborative will ask LDEQ to place air monitoring equipment within the community of Grand Bois for a period of time during this project. This data collection may provide the opportunity to substantiate odor events, or other complaints documented by the Grand Bois community. LDEQ and its enforcement department, have the authority to pursue regulatory actions should any circumstances arise that require such action.

Each of the organizations have a vested interest in working together to resolve environmental concerns for Louisiana's communities. This work is the core of the mission of LEAN as an organization and is a priority for LDEQ and LSU's Superfund Research Program as public entities focused on environmental education and protection in Louisiana.

LEAN has outlined a schedule for this project and developed a reporting schedule for documenting progress. The work plan has been divided into 3 month periods (quarters) and defined in the summary project schedule included below. At the time of submission of this application, all organizations have completed a signed letter of agreement and have been provided the project schedule. In order to facilitate consistent communication and document progress, each organization will submit a monthly progress report to LEAN. LEAN will compile these reports into a monthly project status report that is circulated to all collaborative partners.

These reports will be summarized into quarterly reports by LEAN that will be provided to all collaborative partners as well as the EPA EJ project coordinator. An annual report will be compiled by LEAN at the midway point of the project and a final report upon completion of the two year period. This project will begin in September 2014 and be completed in September 2016.

Please see the included work plan schedule summary below:

EPA Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program EPA-OECA-OEJ-14-01								
	A Collaborative for a Better Grand Bois led by the Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN)							
	Partners: Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN, Louisiana State University (LSU), Defenders of Our Land and Water (DLW), Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)							
Quarter	Sept.1,2014 - Dec.1,2014	Dec.1,2014 - March 1,2015	March 1,2015 - June 1,2015	June 1,2015 - Sept. 1, 2015	Sept. 1, 2015 - Dec.1, 2015	Dec.1,2015 - March 1,2016	March1,2016- June 1,2016	June 1,2016 - Sept. 1,2016
proposed activities	Working meeting to develop Citizen Guidebook with LSU	Workshop hosted in Grand Bois community presenting guidebook to residents and incorporating feedback into final draft	Workshop in GrandBois to develop community goals and implement Guidebook tools to document community concerns	Community utilization of Guidebook tools monitored for 6 month documentation period with assistance from LEAN and LSU		Workshop to interpret community collected data as well as receive feedback on Guidebook as a community resource	Workshop to identify opportunities for reducing documented concerns	Workshop to evaluate community strategies to reduce documented concerns and develop list of recommendations
Goal	development of presentable Guidebook draft	refinement of Guidebook through community input	Identify community concerns and empower residents with tools to document them / Facilitate introductory communication with local industry	Assist community in documenting community identified concerns through utilization of Guidebook tools / facilitate ongoing communication of community documentation with collaborative partners and local industry		Assess public health concerns present in community collected data and further refine Guidebook with community feedback	Develop list of possible actions to reduce community documented concerns both from the residents perspective and the local industry	Assess any improvements in community concerns as a result of collaborative effort / Compile list of recommended strategies to apply in other communities in similar situations.
Partners involved	LEAN, LSU	LEAN, LSU, DLW	LEAN, LSU, DLW, local industry	LEAN, LSU, DLW, LDEQ, local industry		LEAN, LDEQ, LSU, DLW	LEAN, LDEQ, LSU, DLW, local industry	LEAN, LDEQ, LSU, DLW, local industry

Organizational Capacity and Programmatic Capability

The Louisiana Environmental Action Network was founded in an effort to unite citizens across the state into a support system for dealing with environmental concerns at the community level. LEAN has grown to be a highly respected and sought after resource for individuals and organizations navigating a myriad of environmental related problems. LEAN has a long history of, documenting environmental challenges in Louisiana, developing tools for citizens to utilize in addressing their local issues, educating citizens to utilize these tools, facilitating the participation of citizens in resolving environmental problems and interpreting and assessing environmental data. LEAN relies on the many years of experience of our staff led by Executive Director Marylee Orr who has developed a extensive expertise in community organizing and effective citizen advocacy. LEAN's Technical advisor, Wilma Subra, is an environmental chemist with over 40 years experience in dealing with environmental issues in Louisiana and throughout the country. Both Marylee, Wilma and the rest of LEAN's staff have extensive experience in working with communities to develop and implement tools to resolve their environmental concerns.

Recently, LEAN has assisted the community members of Bayou Corne, Louisiana in developing an Odor and Symptom Log to document odor events within their community and potentially related health symptoms. These documents were made accessible in print and online through LEAN's website, leanweb.org. This tool allowed local residents to document concerns they felt were not being monitored adequately by other agencies and communicate them in a standardized and clear way to regulatory agencies and the public as a whole. A similar Odor and Symptom Log was developed and deployed in response to the BP Oil Spill in 2010.

LEAN is currently in the middle of a 5 year collaboration led by the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston to study PAH's in Gulf of Mexico Seafood and coastal residents. LEAN is the lead non-profit organization responsible for facilitating collaboration between UTMB and local communities within Louisiana as well as the production of media tools to communicate the collaboratives mission and progress.

LEAN's scientific expertise, environmental monitoring experience, outreach skills, multi-media(print design and online proficiency) capacity, and community experience and trust make

LEAN uniquely capable of engaging and empowering communities to effectively address their environmental concerns. LEAN has assisted countless communities within Louisiana over the past 27 years. Projects and initiatives LEAN works on are consistently driven by the concerns and priorities of the local community. To assure the responsible management of all financial aspects of LEAN's work, LEAN employs a part time bookkeeper and a certified public accountant to oversee LEAN's accounts.

Qualifications of the Project Manager (PM)

The project manager for this Collaborative is Michael Orr. Michael has been with LEAN for over 3 years. Prior to working for LEAN, Michael earned a Bachelor of Science from Louisiana State University and spent several years managing up to 70 employees and large financial accounts in the hospitality industry. His logistical expertise and personnel management skills led him to being hired by several local restaurant companies to train new service staff.

Since joining LEAN, Michael has been responsible for managing LEAN's many ongoing projects and the logistics and communication strategies involved. Most notably, Michael participated in LEAN's extensive environmental sampling response to the BP Oil Spill and has coordinated LEAN's participation within the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences funded UTMB study inspired by LEAN's work post-Spill. Michael's management experience in dealing with finances, logistics, personnel management, and communication tools will allow him to successfully oversee this collaborative project. Michael's resume is attached to the application package.

LEAN has developed into a family run organization led by Marylee Orr and supported by her two sons Paul Orr and Michael Orr. As the son of an environmental advocate, Michael has been exposed to the many community struggles LEAN has addressed over the years. This upbringing has resulted in a lifetime of diverse, unique and community focused environmental education. Michael first became aware of the Grand Bois community through meeting Mrs Clarice Friloux at LEAN's annual conference in the late 90's. Mrs Clarice's position on LEAN's board has kept Michael and the rest of LEAN aware of the challenges facing Grand Bois. Recently, Michael and Paul utilized their multi-media skills to build a modern and engaging online platform for educational video storytelling. Within this platform, Michael helped to produce and direct a short video documenting the story of the Grand Bois community through an interview with Mrs Clarice and Mr Danny Friloux. This video allows the public to hear the story of Grand Bois and is supplemented by historical newspaper clipping, an interactive map and links to other resources describing the issues related to the Grand Bois community. This work has helped to elevate the public awareness of the struggle within Grand Bois and built an online resource for anyone interesting in learning more about the issues there. The EPA EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving agreement is a welcomed and needed next step in affecting substantive change in a community that has seen little relief from their concerns in almost two decades.

Past Performance in Reporting on Outputs and Outcomes

The Louisiana Environmental Action Network has been a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization in good standing for over 27 years. LEAN has a long history of responsibly managing grants from private foundations and donors and as well as EPA funding in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Though LEAN has not received any EPA funding in the past 5 years, LEAN does retain active working relationships with EPA staff and has a documented history of their support.

LEAN has extensive experience in managing projects and reporting outputs and outcomes to private foundations and donors. LEAN has no history of complaints in reporting from any of our work with past funders or collaborators. LEAN regularly compiled reports and status updates as

required by individual project parameters. LEAN also utilizes consistent online e-alerts to keep the public, LEAN members, and funders up to date on LEAN's activities.

Recent projects successfully managed by LEAN include:

The Louisiana Waterkeeper Collaborative

A collaborative between LEAN, Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, and the Quachita Riverkeeper program to monitor and improve the water quality of Louisiana.

Amount: \$200,000.00

Term: 2 years

Funded by the McKnight Foundation

Program Officer: Ron Kruz

SOLA2050.ORG

A multi-media online platform utilizing video interviews to educate and explore the diverse perspectives of Louisiana's unique environment.

Amount: \$80,000.00

Term: 2 years

Funded by Blue Moon Fund

Program Officer: Kristin Tracz

GC-HARMS

The "Gulf Coast Health Alliance: Health Risks Related to the Macondo Spill" (GC-HARMS) research project seeks to characterize health impacts and community resiliency factors related to the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster. GC-HARMS is a collaborative response to characterizing environmental health risks and building community resiliency after the Deep Water Horizon disaster in the northern Gulf of Mexico.

Term: 5 years

Contact: Dr. Sharon Croissant, UTMB

Expenditures of Awarded Grant Funds

LEAN will be solely responsible for the expenditure and reporting of awarded grant funds. For this project LEAN will be requiring monthly status reports to document progress and assure clear communication among collaborative partners. These monthly reports will also be the mechanism to expend and document funding throughout the project term. Expenses accrued during each month will be documented on a monthly basis with appropriate documentation (receipts, etc.). The receipt of these monthly reports will be the mechanism to release the appropriate funds to cover these expenses in a timely and efficient manner.

Sample Monthly status report form below:

Monthly Partner Report to the Louisiana Environmental Action Network	
Month:	<i>September</i>
Organization	<i>Concerned Citizens of BR</i>
Summary of activities	<i>organized workshop community presentation..</i>
Goals achieved	<i>educated 25 people...</i>
Obstacles encountered in acheiving goals	<i>inclement weather limited workshop turnout</i>
Summary of Expenses (attach documentation, receipts. etc.)	<i>Facility rental, handout printing...</i>
Total expenses	<i>\$375.00</i>

Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Information

This project will require a Quality Assurance Project plan that will be developed as the project progresses.